FCHS HONOR CODE PLEDGE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­\_

**SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD – JONATHAN EDWARDS**

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect, over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times so abominable in his eyes as the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince: and yet ’tis nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment: It is to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night; that you was suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep: and there is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God’s hand has held you up: There is no other reason to be given why you haven’t gone to hell since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship: Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you don’t this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: It is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the damned in hell: You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment.

And consider here more particularly several things concerning that wrath that you are in such danger of. Whose wrath it is: It is the wrath of the infinite GOD. If it were only the wrath of man, though it were of the most potent prince, it would be comparatively little to be regarded. The wrath of kings is very much dreaded, especially of absolute monarchs, that have the possessions and lives of their subjects wholly in their power, to be disposed of at their mere will. Proverbs 20:2. The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger, sinneth against his own soul. The subject that very much enrages an arbitrary prince, is liable to suffer the most extreme torments, that human art can invent or human power can inflict. But the greatest earthly potentates, in their greatest majesty and strength, and when clothed in their greatest terrors, are but feeble despicable worms of the dust, in comparison of the great and almighty creator and king of heaven and earth: it is but little that they can do, when most enraged, and when they have exerted the utmost of their fury. All the kings of the earth before GOD are as grasshoppers, they are nothing and less than nothing: Both their love and their hatred is to be despised. The wrath of the great King of Kings is as much more terrible than theirs, as his majesty is greater. Luke Chapter 12: Verses 4, 5. And I say unto you my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea I say unto you, fear him.

It is the fierceness of his wrath that you are exposed to. We often read of the fury of God; as in Isaiah Chapter 59 Verse 18. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries. So Isaiah 66 Verse 15. For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebukes with flames of fire. And so in many other places. So we read of God’s fierceness. Revelations Chapter 19, verse 15. There we read of the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. The words are exceeding terrible: if it had only been said, the wrath of God, the words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful: But ’tis not only said so, but the fierceness and wrath of God: the fury of God! The fierceness of Jehovah! Oh how dreadful must that be! Who can utter or conceive what such expressions carry in them! But it is not only said so, but the fierceness and wrath of *ALMIGHTY GOD*. As though there would be a very great manifestation of his almighty power, in what the fierceness of his wrath should inflict, as though omnipotence should be as it were enraged, and exerted, as men are wont to exert their strength in the fierceness of their wrath. Oh! Then what will be the consequence! What will become of the poor worm that shall suffer it! Whose hands can be strong? And whose heart endure? To what a dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable depth of misery must the poor creature be sunk, who shall be the subject of this!

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And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein CHRIST has flung the door of mercy wide open, and stands in the door calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the kingdom of God; many are daily coming from the east, west, north and south; many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in, are in now an happy state, with their hearts filled with love to him that has loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful is it to be left behind at such a day! To see so many others feasting, while you are pining and perishing! To see so many rejoicing and singing for joy of heart, while you have cause to mourn for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit! How can you rest one moment in such a condition? Are not your souls as precious as the souls of the people where they are flocking from day to day to Christ? Are there not many here that have lived *long* in the world, that are not to this day born again, and so are aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, and have done nothing ever since they have lived, but treasure up wrath against the day of wrath? Oh sirs, your case in an especial manner is extremely dangerous; your guilt and hardness of heart is extremely great. Don’t you see how generally persons of your years are passed over and left, in the present remarkable and wonderful dispensation of God’s mercy? You had need to consider your selves, and wake thoroughly out of sleep; you cannot bear the fierceness and wrath of the infinite GOD.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. *How would you personally respond to the “fire and brimstone” portion of this sermon, at the front of the text? How do you suppose 18th Century Americans might have responded?*

2. *Puritan’s belief in predestination was a commonly held, especially in New England. Despite its severe nature, why might the sermon we read be more attractive to God-fearing people than traditional churches?*

3. *In New England, the church was the center of society. How did this type of sermon, by a traveling preacher like Jonathan Edwards, undermine the traditional churches’ authority?*

4. *Is there any connection between the “Great Awakening” of the 1730s and 1740s and the origins of the American Revolution? Explain your answers.*